## Social Status of the Moaga Woman and Work Assigned to Her

562 The Moaga woman is regarded as a veritable beast of burden. Household duties and the weaving of cotton for her own and her husband's clothes are not her only occupations. [183] She helps her husband cultivate the family field, and she has her own plots for peanuts, beans, etc.

She endures wretched treatment and must always submit to her husband's whims. She enjoys no consideration whatever and is never called upon to give an opinion. The husband alone rules the home.

[842] If she is so unfortunate as to have no children, she is regarded with scorn. She carries the loads when a move is in progress. A [482] basket and a pyramid of gourds containing her effects and those of her husband are balanced on her head, while the husband canters beside her on a horse or takes his ease on a donkey. If he is afoot, he carries only his quiver, his arrows, his bow, and a club.

To be sure, the Moaga woman may express in unpleasant words her resentment of the maltreatment to which she is subjected, because the Mossi admit that she has no weapon other than her tongue. This is what is meant by the saying, "A woman's mouth is her quiver."

## Conjugal Life

834 Interdictions and permissible acts. The couple is forbidden to have sexual relations at the following times.

1. For a period of not less than two years and a half after the 834 birth of a child to safeguard the baby's life. Indeed, it is believed 853 that each child comes into the world with its own supply of milk, and if another child were to be conceived during the nursing period, [184] the first would die because the milk of the newborn child would be fatal to him.

834 2. During the menstrual period. The reason for this prohibition ●841 that the husband's fetishes and charms lose part of their "power" after relations at this time.

834 3. A pregnant woman visits her husband during the first six or 843 seven months. All relations then cease until some time after the delivery, as indicated above.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
445 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the
●[841] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."